9th January 1954]

Merger of the Prohibition Department with the Police Department.

* 388-M *Q.*—SRI A. RATNAM (on behalf of Sri M. Dharmalingam): Will the Hon. the Minister for Prohibition be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether it is a fact that the Prohibition Department is proposed to be merged with the Police Department; and

(*b*) if so, when and whether any arrangement has been made to absorb the existing staff of the Prohibition Department?

THE HON. SRIMATHI JOTHI VENCATACHELLUM:—"(*a*) & (*b*) Prohibition is at present enforced by the Excise and Prohibition Department in the districts of Chingleput, South Arcot, Ramanathapuram, Tirunelveli, the Nilgiris, Malabar, South Kanara and Madras City. It is enforced by the Police Department in the other districts of the State as part of their regular duties. The Government have under consideration a proposal to entrust to the Police Department the enforcement of Prohibition throughout the State. The arrangements necessary for absorbing the existing staff of the Excise and Prohibition Department and the other implications of the proposal are now being examined."

SRI V. R. KRISHNA AYYAR:—"May I bring to the notice of the Hon. Minister for Prohibition two important facts? So far as the Police are concerned, they have been in very friendly contact with hot drinks in the pre-Prohibition days and, generally speaking, therefore they have a particular tradition in the enforcement of the Prohibition Act. Secondly, they are already having surfeit of powers, concentration of powers. More powers given to them will only prove that absolute power corrupts absolutely. In view of that, will the Government distribute the powers of enforcing the Prohibition Act to persons or departments with a clean tradition or without an unclean tradition? I suggest that the enforcement of Prohibition may not be handed over to the Police."

MR. SPEAKER:—"This is only a suggestion."

THE HON. SRI C. RAJAGOPALACHARI:—"It is not merely a suggestion but a long argument with a number of accusations which are not correct. All classes of society suffer from some disabilities, as the policemen did when there was no prohibition, including lawyers, Members of the Government, officers, Members of the Legislative Assembly and for that matter, everybody. There is no necessity to specially pick out the Police. As regards the Excise department, probably they were in greater contact with liquor than the Police. Therefore, there is an advantage in the Police being there. On the whole, the hon. Member's objection, apart from the accusations he has made which are groundless, will also be considered along with other matters."

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SRI K. VINAYAKAM :—" Will the Hon. the Chief Minister be pleased to assure the House that when the prohibition work is transferred to the Police Department, the men employed in the Prohibition Department will not be thrown out of employment and that nobody should be discharged from service? "

THE HON. SRI C. RAJAGOPALACHARI :—" Every measure of economy, every rearrangement on grounds of policy and expediency involves this difficulty. Hon. Members should not imagine that their business is only to defend the retrenched people but the general expediency of the State should be the first concern of hon. Members."

SRI P. SELVARAJ :—" Sir, by this merger, does the Government effect economy or efficiency? "

THE HON. SRI C. RAJAGOPALACHARI :—" Only efficiency is the object but economy is always kept in mind."

SRI M. NARAYANA KURUP :—" In view of the fact that the success of Prohibition depends upon the quality of men who are engaged in this work, will the Government entrust the enforcement of this Act to specially trained people? "

THE HON. SRI C. RAJAGOPALACHARI :—" Sir, it is not propaganda that is involved in the matter. It is the detection and punishment of offenders and the like. Now, here no question of training is involved other than what is involved in ordinary criminal investigation and that is why, the Police are considered better."

SRI A. RAMASAMY TEVAR :—" May I know from the Hon. the Chief Minister, whether the Government will consider the desirability of revising the Prohibition Act so as to inflict capital punishment and thus mitigate illicit distillation and illicit drink? "

THE HON. SRI C. RAJAGOPALACHARI :—" Merely changing the sentences in the Penal Code will not improve our people. We should all set examples." (Laughter.)

Refugees from foreign pockets in India.

9·20 a.m. * 389 *Q.*—SRI K. MADHAVAN NAMBIAR : Will the Hon. the Chief Minister be pleased to state whether any refugees from foreign pockets like Pondicherry and Mahe have taken shelter in this State; and if so, their number and the extent of State-aid given to them?

THE HON. SRI C. RAJAGOPALACHARI :—" The answer to the first part of the question is in the affirmative. Exact figures are not available, but it is estimated that about 800 men, 400 women and 200 children have come over from the French Settlements to this State.